

## Ep 90: Wines of Moldova with Victoria Daskal



**Janina Doyle 00:00:07** Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just can not get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello and welcome back to another episode. Hope you've all had some wonderful wine adventure with a bottle of wine you've opened up the week. Well, today we're gonna take you on a different adventure and we're going across to Moldova. So this is part two with Victoria Daskal, who's a second stage Master of Wine candidate and founder of Mummy wine club, wine writer, wine educator, well she was actually born in Moldova, so has had the experience a few years ago to go and visit the country and get to know the wine scene over there. So there's loads to talk about, and you're gonna find out in the next half an hour, but I have been very lucky to get my hands on a bottle of Moldova wine. So let's go across to my winery of the week.

**Janina Doyle 00:01:22** So first of all, big shout out to moldovawine.co.uk. Yes, people living in the UK, there is a whole array of different Moldovan wines on this website. So it's really easy for you guys to get hold of it. And I have got a bottle of Rosé. Yes, I know that's wishful thinking in the words of Game of Thrones. Winter is coming. As I record just the other day, April fools day, great fools day joke. It was snowing. Anyway, may I drink this Rosé for you now and let the universe realize that it is nearly summer season. So in my hand right now, I have a bottle from the winery Sălcuța. Now these guys have been going since 1995, they're a family business, and they're now in their third generation. You're gonna find them in the Southeastern part of Moldova. So this is the IGP Ștefan Vodă, and they're in a specific town called Căușeni. Now they own all their own fruit, which always helps for quality purposes. They have 400 hectares. So I don't think they're going anywhere. They're not tiny. Now they have lots of influence from the Black Sea and the Nistru River. They export by the way to 20 countries. And they definitely go to China, Canada, and USA, which I know many of my listeners are situated. Now their entire focus is on high quality and all about terroir-focused wines. Now, the Rosé I have is the Eno Tămâioasa de Sălcuța. Now the Eno part is the reflection of basically their, their innovation in wine making. So it reflects them taking their best grapes and vinifying them in a much more modern way. It's a beautiful bottle with some gorgeous, like bronze foil design. So they've definitely gone modern. And in fact, even on the front, they have a whole little story written in English. So quite clearly they are thinking of the global wine movement as they make their wines.

**Janina Doyle 00:03:30** So let's have little pour of this. And I have to say, oh, to the most beautiful ballerina, slipper pink color. Mmmmm. On the nose, there is a really thick scent. So it smells sweet and floral, actually it's intoxicating. It is intense. Now this is 70% Pinot Noir, but with 30% Muscat Hamburg,

also known as Black Muscat, which is often eaten as a table grape. So this is part of the muscat family, which muscat is known for its grapey and pronounced sweet floral aromas. However, normally Muscat Hamburg is considered the weakest, the weakest link in the family in terms of aromas. But if you do leave it on the vine for longer, you can get more aromatics. So I can only imagine that the viticultural team here has worked magic out in the vineyards because wow, I am getting lilies and Jasmine, along with like orange blossom. Now there's even this kind of lemon sherbet, Turkish delight vibe going on. And perhaps actually a little muskiness from white roses. So sweet, floral and intoxicating. That is what you get on the nose. Hmm. Now on the palate, I wanna make it clear. It is completely dry. This is a dry wine, but it is rounded. We're talking medium plus, even full body. It's really mouth coating. Okay. This is an opulent wine. It has this real oiliness. So rose oil, but there's like clementine and watermelon, some cranberries even, and some overripe strawberries. Now, along with all that fruit, there's like a really spicy redcurrent finish. And there's a enough acidity to bring it all together. It's not super high, but it stops the wine being flabby. There's a medium long finish. And also something a little bit herby on the end too. I have to say, this is incredibly unique as a Rosé and it's explosive. So if you like the sound of that, this is 15 pounds a bottle. This is the 2020 vintage. It is on moldovawine.co.uk. And as I'll tell you, at the end of the episode, in the subscription box with the Mummy Wine Club. Now, if you are getting a bottle of this, which I hope you will, it's certainly different in terms of food pairings, because it's got all the aromatics and loads of flavor. Of course, instantly I think to go across to Asian food, that's where Muscat often takes us, Riesling, Gewürztraminer, any of these more aromatic varieties. One thing is it's not sweet, so I wouldn't put it with anything too spicy. The acidity is not crazy high. So I would avoid squeezing lots of lemon and lime on the dish. But the fact that it's so highly perfume, this wine, I'd be looking for bolder flavors in food. So maybe something like a Thai red duck Curry, or some sausages that are spiced and herbed, or even something like a caramelized onion tart or caramelized onion quiche would work beautifully. So enough of me talking, I'm excited for you to learn a little bit about what this wine country has to offer. So let's go over to the chat with Victoria now.

**Janina Doyle 00:07:21** All right. So now I wanna go back in time to history. You were born in Moldova.

**Victoria Daskal 00:07:27** Oh yeah.

**Janina Doyle 00:07:28** Yeah. Well you might remember that.

**Victoria Daskal 00:07:30** I don't actually.

**Janina Doyle 00:07:31** Well you say you've been told.

**Victoria Daskal 00:07:33** Yes. My mom tells me that.

**Janina Doyle 00:07:34** And you just have to believe her. And you were lucky enough to go back a few years ago weren't you, for the first time in what, 30 years?

**Victoria Daskal 00:07:42** Yeah. Well, no more than that, I mean, but basically I left, um, I was born there and then I had actually lived in Ukraine in Odessa until I was five and then I, and then we moved to America. So I, you know, when we moved, we I'd never been back to Moldova or Ukraine. And I, you know, I'd always been very curious and wanted to go back. Um, and even living in London, you know, you're a little, you know, that much closer there, but, um, hadn't had the chance. And then I got the opportunity while working at World of Fine Wine. There was an opportunity to go and write about

Moldova as a wine country. Um, and of course, you know, I jumped on that. I really wanted to go and went in October, 2019 for eight, you know, eight days. And basically we traveled through most of the country. I mean, we, we, we visited as much as we could in that time. Um, tasted a lot. Um, it was a really amazing trip. I mean, I, I have to say I felt like I saw a lot and tasted a lot and experienced a lot, but there was still nothing compared to how much more I want to, you know, learn and, and go back and kind of watch how it develops and, and, you know, do as much as I can to kind of really understand that wine country, because it's, it kind of also made sense, like, you know, being born there and now realizing how wine is so ingrained in the culture there and how, you know, now it's like, oh, no wonder I work in wine. It really part of your DNA.

**Janina Doyle 00:09:07** It was there in your, in your blood. But so you say it's part of the culture. I read the article that you wrote, uh, for The World of Fine Wine. Very good, by the way, everyone, if you can find it, check it out. Um, but it, what you really cover the whole spectrum of history, its culture, where it's going, it's problems, which is amazing. So I, I really wanna pick your brain now, but the history goes back so far. So did I remember right that even on their national dresses, there are vines.

**Victoria Daskal 00:09:35** Yes. Yes. Well, yeah, it, it is. It's like, it goes back. I mean, evidence of it, of, of it being a wine producing region goes back thousands of years, you know, we think of Georgia, of course being you know, the cradle of wine making and, you know, or Armenia perhaps, but it's that region and Moldova's included in that definitely they've had wine for thousands of years and, you know, for hundreds of years been making wine, you know, but they they've had a lot of stop starts. You know, it's been part of the Soviet union that of course then turned it into a very bulk wine producing country. And also not just making wine, um, for, you know, quantity over quality, but also not even having to sell it because they making it in a way that they just needed to supply it to, to Russia and rather than actually sell it to different markets. And I think that really influences how, you know, producers make wine and, and learn how to sell it and market it worldwide because if you're not having to be pressured to kind of make the best possible wine and then, you know, and find consumers for it, it's, you're gonna make different kind of wines. So, um, so now, you know, because they've had to change focus, um, they've had two very serious embargoes, um, on them from Russia and they kind of basically instantly lost their market overnight, you know, 80% of their wine was going there and then suddenly they had to stop and, um, and focus on quality over quantity. And that...

**Janina Doyle 00:11:01** Which is a good thing.

**Victoria Daskal 00:11:03** It's a fantastic thing. Absolutely. But of course it had its, you know, challenges, um, and it's still, you know, it's still a thing that they are working on and developing, but there's so much good there and there's, you know, they're really blessed to have an amazing, um, terroir. I think like they they've got excellent conditions for growing grapes. I mean, it's really like the grape kind of grape growing is like, so ingrained in that country. Everybody seems to have grapes growing in their gardens, like every, you know, every, every, every household, every everyone who has like some kind of land is growing grape vines, it's just naturally growing there. And so one thing I found so funny, just even going through the kind of more countryside streets is that like every there's like all these old ladies, um, you know, sitting, selling their local wine, their local sheep milk, you know, know, they're just, it's really, um, again, it's very much part of the culture and in some ways it's a little bit of a challenge as well, because domestically, they don't have a huge amount of demand because everyone seems to be making their own wine. Do you know what I mean? It's just like, right.

**Janina Doyle 00:12:10** So they're not really buying it cause they...yeah.

**Victoria Daskal 00:12:11** They're not even buying the good stuff because there, there is some really good stuff, but everyone seems to be like the general population that's there just seems to have a grandma that makes it for them anyway, and in a, in a very natural way. And I think it's funny, but cause there's a little bit of a distrust for things that are commercially made there still. And so they always prefer something that's homemade versus something that's been, you know, it is again, it's a little bit of, um, kind of a souvenir from the Soviet times and like anything that's homemade is gonna be a little bit more safer and, and cleaner and a little bit more, um, just better for you. So that's a kind of a mindset that is slowly shifting, but it's a reason why there's not a huge domestic market, especially for the very top end stuff. And now it's starting, starting to kind of be exported, um, beyond, you know, maybe Romania, Poland and China as a, as an importer, but like UK as well as buying some more good stuff from them.

**Janina Doyle 00:13:10** Now when you say good stuff with everybody making their own wine and it being obviously natural, if they're making it themselves, the commercial wineries or the ones that are making, are doing the highest production or the best quality, are they making the wines quite naturally as well? Cause it's part of the culture or is actually it's quite commercial?

**Victoria Daskal 00:13:31** That's such a good question and yeah, not at all, actually that was a big surprise to me. Is that commercially, you know, in a way people are really right to, to think that actually what's being grown in their gardens is a lot, you know, more natural than what's being made because there's not really much organic viticulture in Moldova yet. At least not when I was there. Um, I think of all the places I visited, not a single one of them was growing grapes organically. Not even, I'm not even talking about certification, I'm just saying even just without the use of any kind of pesticides or fungicides, nobody was doing that yet. And that's again, based on what they learned from the Soviet times, which was just, you know, let's do it efficiently. And that just means, you know, not having the patience to maybe come up with more natural resistances and more of a kind of holistic approach to the vineyard. There's not that kind of mindset yet. Um, so yes, you're, you know, you're right to point out actually that the commercial, um, wine isn't made in, in that kind of natural way. Um, and perhaps there's a reason why that a lot of the domestic consumers do trust their grandma's wines a little bit more, even though I think that, I think the flavors of the wines though, are very different. I did try one and I thought I wouldn't drink this actually. Like I I'm talking about the kinda the litre jug, you know, the stuff that, the stuff that sold on the side of the road, I wouldn't say it's, you know, taste wise. I would not say it's anything to write home about, but the stuff that's being made, um, in the wineries today that I tasted, you know, there's some very interesting and exciting wines. And actually the best of them were the ones that were, um, using local grape varieties. So there's a lot of international grapes planted there. So a lot of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Uh, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, there's a lot of that, because again, that came from Soviet era time where, you know, that was what, you know, people knew, people kind of held that up as the best grape, you know, to be planting, but really, um, now the producers that are, you know, the kind of the next generation, they're going back to their roots and looking up the varieties that are, you know, more historical to the region, a lot of them are the same as Romanian grapes. So like, so Saperavi actually is more local to them.

**Janina Doyle 00:15:50** Oh really. Obviously, so Saperavi, which we know from Georgia, right? Actually I have heard that in general that, a lot of the Eastern European countries that are growing

grapes, Saperavi and the Rkatsiteli, the white wine. Two top Georgia wines do really well in Romania, in Moldova, uh, in Ukraine, where they're producing wines. Okay. That's really interesting. That's still doing really well there. Okay.

**Victoria Daskal 00:16:15** Yeah. So in Moldova the kind of native varieties. There are only 5% of the total plantings, but they are grapes like Feteasca Alba, Feteasca Regala, Feteasca Neagra, Rara Neagra. Um, another one that really stood out to me was Viorica cause it's just very aromatic like...

**Janina Doyle 00:16:32** Viorica? Yeah never heard of, so aromatic. Okay.

**Victoria Daskal 00:16:35** It's very aromatic. It's like a Muscat. Yeah. It's um, quite nice. Actually, very, very floral and grapey.

**Janina Doyle 00:16:41** Beautiful. Are they making that in dry styles as well?

**Victoria Daskal 00:16:46** Dry. Yes. Yeah. And it, you know, and you can get some really nice, you know, it might not appear to everybody to say like a very floral grapey wine, but actually when it's done nice and dry um, in the summertime it's, you know, delicious. What I would say though, that, you know, it's kind of impossible to immediately only find those grapes because it's only 5% of the planting. So there's still a lot of the commercial kind of international grape plantings that they have to still work with what they've got and now you might find more blends, so Cabernet Sauvignon and Rara Neagra or, you know, Sauvignon Blanc and Viorica kind of blended together, but I would love to see more just of the, you know, single varietals that are really indigenous to the region cause they are so unique and they just, they do taste different and they really, I think naturally are from, from that region and they grow well there.

**Janina Doyle 00:17:37** So is like Feteasca Neagra actually, do they know the history goes back to Moldova or Romania or it's kind of, cause I think cause they both share that grape variety don't they? These Feteasca grape varieties.

**Victoria Daskal 00:17:50** Yeah, definitely Feteasca Neagra it's an ancient variety, local to the region. It is kind of, is really a Romanian grape, but is also very native to Moldova as well. And because Moldovan, Romania, you know, there were one region at one point, so there's not huge difference. Um, in terroir and, and a huge difference in climate there, it works really well in both countries.

**Janina Doyle 00:18:13** We should probably point out for anyone who hasn't gone to Google maps because I did before this episode, but didn't quite know exactly where Moldova was. Romania is literally to the west and Ukraine is to the east just so people know where we are and it's landlocked. It doesn't actually touch the sea.

**Victoria Daskal 00:18:32** Yeah. I think it's, it's interesting that it's kind of part of the black sea region. Absolutely. But it doesn't actually touch the black sea. It's about kind of five kilometers away, but geographically and kind of climate wise, it is influenced by the black sea a lot and so you, you would consider, you know, what are the black sea wine regions or black sea wine countries. Um, and it does have, you know, two major rivers the Prut and the Dniester that go through the country.

**Janina Doyle 00:18:59** Of course. And to be honest, and we haven't actually touched on climate, obviously you said like the sea, anything that is close to the sea is gonna have that kind of more

maritime effect and cooling breezes, but actually in general, it's kind of a, it's still a continental climate, right? Like lovely warm summers and...

**Victoria Daskal 00:19:17** Yeah, no, I, I mean I understood that I was there in October, so I found it was, you know, very nice, very mild, beautiful long kind of autumn. And um, but it is, I think it is influenced by the black sea. It's got kind of very, you know, around that area. It's got quite milder, milder winters, closer to the sea as you go up further north much colder. Um, and they, you know, they get, they get snow, they get frost, they can get drought as well and the hot summers. So, um, they kind of get all of the...

**Janina Doyle 00:19:47** So more continental as you go up, but obviously more maritime as, as you go a bit further down. So where are the wine regions cause I know from reading your article, cause I get to pretend like I actually knew this in advance. I didn't um, there are three wine regions in Moldova, right?

**Victoria Daskal 00:20:03** There are only three. Yeah. So Valul lui Traian, which is in the Southwest, Ștefan Vodă in the Southeast, Codru in, in the centre and then there's a fourth region called Divin, which is really just for Brandy production. Um, so they're not actually making wine from those grapes. Um, so yeah, so just three major regions. And so it's not, because it is a small country, you can travel through it and see kind of something from everywhere. Um, which is, which is fantastic. It's not something that, you know, can be said about a lot of countries.

**Janina Doyle 00:20:35** That's true.

**Victoria Daskal 00:20:36** Yeah. It's quite densely planted. It's I think I read in Caroline Gilby's book that it was the country that is the most economically dependent on wine in the world, which is incredible.

**Janina Doyle 00:20:46** Ah, interesting.

**Victoria Daskal 00:20:48** Yeah. And it also has the highest density of grapevine per person anywhere. But I think part of that is also linked to the fact that as I said before, everybody is growing grapes, you know, just for their own personal consumption. So it's not just, you know, commercially planted. Yes. But it also for personal, you know, everybody's got grapes growing and everybody can make wine there as well. So it's, it's, you know, they even say the country shaped like a bunch of grapes, which I think is interesting.

**Janina Doyle 00:21:15** I read that and I looked and it kind of does it's like the grapes with like maybe a big leaf at the top or something, you know, I get it. Well for anybody who wants to know about Hectares, certainly from your article and this is going back a few years, but give or take. So in Moldova there's 132,000 hectares planted. So for anyone who wants to compare that to Bordeaux, we are talking about 110,000, 115,000 hectares in Bordeaux. So that gives people a bit of, bit of context.

**Victoria Daskal 00:21:44** That's interesting, isn't it? Yeah. Put into context like that.

**Janina Doyle 00:21:48** So if people were to fly into Chișinău, you said like it's really easy to travel everywhere. I believe there's wine routes now? I presume, did you kind of cover all of them?

**Victoria Daskal 00:21:59** Well, I felt like I did, but I definitely didn't. I mean, there's there. I mean, I, we did so much, we were on the road a lot that week, but um, since I visited a few months later, there's

been some really great developments there on the travel side. Um, there's a new European cultural root of the vine and wine, uh, which is basically three roots that tourists can do to visit 28 wineries.

**Janina Doyle 00:22:21** Oh wow. It's, that's dedicated,

**Victoria Daskal 00:22:23** It's very dedicated, very specific. And I think it's also includes, um, kind of 30, non wine tourism attractions, which I actually think are a must just for the food aspect and the cultural point of view because, so the non wine tourism attractions would be things like, um, country houses that have restaurants in them that cook really gorgeous, um, you know, local cuisine. It's just really natural and, and you know, Moldovan food that it's, you know, not really found anywhere else. So, um, so the wine roots are great because they can take you around all the different wineries and you know, you get, and they touch on, you know, the old and new, it leads you to places like Mileștii Mici, which is the longest wine cell in the world. It's in the, in the....

**Janina Doyle 00:23:04** Okay.

**Victoria Daskal 00:23:05** Yeah. It's in the Guinness world book of records. I think it holds something like a million five hundred thousand bottles underground and you need a car to get around. It's pretty intense, but it's very...

**Janina Doyle 00:23:14** What, you need a car to get around, like...

**Victoria Daskal 00:23:16** Underground.

**Janina Doyle 00:23:17** You take a car underground?

**Victoria Daskal 00:23:18** Yes. Yes. It's, it's basically like a city underground. Um, and there's another one that's similar called Cricova, which is also, you know, a very, it's got 75 miles of roadways underground. It's literally a wine city. They have a movie theater, they have a chapel. Yes. They have an underground chape there. Yeah. It's all underground. It's really interesting. I mean, I've never seen anything like that anywhere. Um, where, you know, and I think they have things like a church there because the workers that were building it, um, you know, they needed to go and pray like, you know, they wanted to still go have a place of worship. So there's everything. There's restaurants, there's, um, you know, several restaurants and it's really interesting, you know, just from, for any wine lover. I think it's interesting just to see something like that. It's very unique. Um, but really those are, you know, older kind of very historical things, nothing that is, I wouldn't say that they're making the kind of wines that I think are the future for Moldova, but they are still very interesting as, as a kind of a cultural reference and a cultural attraction. Um, I think the things that really strike me as the future, um, from Moldova are like the urban wineries or the young generation of wine producers. And, you know, these are young producers that have traveled the world. They've gone to Burgundy and Italy. Um, California, they've gone, they've seen, you know, modern wine making. They've seen slightly, you know, although know, not there yet with organics, but they've seen how you don't need to spray as much. You can actually kind of be a little bit light handed on that. And, um, and also the, the focus on quality is more part of their mentality than, than their kind of predecessors. So I would say, you know, you know, I can send you some ideas if you wanted to share that with your, with your listeners, but there's some really fantastic producers that are actually now even available in the UK, um, that I'll be including some of them in my box as well, coming up.

**Janina Doyle 00:25:16** Yeah, exactly. So going back quickly to your Mummy Wine Club subscription box, you're gonna be doing, is it gonna be the all four wines will be Moldovan or Black Sea focus?

**Victoria Daskal 00:25:27** Yeah, I think my, the focus will be on around the Black Sea, but even though, as we said, Moldova's not, you know, officially on the Black Sea, it is very much part of the Black Sea basin as part of the Black Sea influence. So it'll include wine from Moldova.

**Janina Doyle 00:25:42** There you go everyone.

**Victoria Daskal 00:25:43** Yeah. And I just think, you know, there's some really exciting producers coming out that I think people will be really impressed and surprised at the quality. And I don't think people should expect these wines to be, you know, dirt cheap. Like they have to be willing to pay something for them, but also to be highly rewarded with what they get, because there's some really incredible flavors and, and the qualities there. And, you know, I think they are trying to go beyond that kind of bulk wine price point and expectation and really deliver something phenomenal. So I'm really impressed.

**Janina Doyle 00:26:15** I love it. So if anyone's gonna get some Moldovan wine from your wine box or they're going to purchase a bottle and, and they wanna be really, really cultural here, what would be a classic food pairing and wine pairing from Moldova? What would they eat?

**Victoria Daskal 00:26:32** Yeah. That's a great question. I think some of my favorite things that we had, there was something called plăcinte or plăcinte. Um, and that was Moldovan pies that had different kinds of fillings. And you could have like savory ones with cheese or pumpkin, um, or you could have, or potato for instance, or you could have more sweet ones like for cherries and apple. And it's just a really nice, you know, something you could have kind of at different points of the meal. And they're really, really good. Um, another one was kind of cabbage, a kind of stuffed cabbage, which I know sounds maybe less exciting cause you can, you can find that in different cuisines in Eastern Europe, but they have these like really lovely small ones called Sarmale, which are really delicious. Um, kind of meat and rice wrapped, um, wrapped in cabbage and then, you know, the big one is, um, Mamalyga, which is basically polenta. It was, you know, a new experience for me. Although I have to say since I've tried Mamalyga there, I really liked it and I've been trying to have it at home. I haven't convinced my kids yet though. They're still not. They're still unsure about it. They're like, is it pasta? Is it cous cous? Like, no, it's, neither, it's better. Um, need to try to convince them about polenta. But's very good. It's really nice. Um, and it can be, you know, served alongside so many dishes it's sort of, instead of bread, it's like the carb on the, on the, on the table.

**Janina Doyle 00:27:56** Now just a quick question. When you were there, regardless of grape varieties, with the younger winemakers, which you are hoping is the future because they're doing fantastic things. Are they doing sparkling wines? Are they doing sweet wines? Is there a little bit of orange wines? Is there a little bit of playing around and bringing all the different styles together?

**Victoria Daskal 00:28:18** Yeah, yeah, definitely. I mean, I, there's definitely sparkling wine, white, rosé, red, sweet. I have to admit, I did not see or try any orange wine, but I wouldn't, you know, I also wouldn't be surprised if somebody was doing it.

**Janina Doyle 00:28:32** We've got to investigate. Yeah. Cause if they've got, if they've got Rkatsiteli, the white grape variety from Georgia, you would think maybe they're playing around with a little bit of orange, one of these things, isn't it?

**Victoria Daskal 00:28:46** Yeah, definitely.

**Janina Doyle 00:28:46** If it's not, the fact that they've, as you've mentioned, they were doing bulk production. It's still now a very new thing of actually wineries setting up and doing things on a more commercial basis. I suppose they're probably still very much finding their feet aren't they?

**Victoria Daskal 00:29:01** I think so. I think so, but it's, it's, it's one of those where, when I found was that there's some producers who are still doing wine in a very kind of traditional, like oak is best and you know, high extraction is best, sort of mentality, but then there's some, some of the younger producers who are really, um, edging away from that. And they're really focusing on these great bright fruit flavors and, you know, pristine and a little bit of, you know, the clean natural flavors. So I'm really intrigued about how both of those, um, you know, kinds of producers will, will, will work, you know, the sort of traditionals and the modern, and see, you know, see who's doing what and how, how they get on.

**Janina Doyle 00:29:40** And last question, are you happy to mention a few of these younger producers that you think are doing very good things?

**Victoria Daskal 00:29:47** Oh yeah, definitely. So one of the things I did from my article was pick a case from Moldova, which is basically, you know, what would be my dream, you know, 12 bottles to bring to a dinner party. And, you know, I tried to be as, as wide as, um, kind of I could with the styles and the producers and some of the ones I mentioned were for instance, Atu winery, which is Moldova's first urban winery. So they buy grapes from all over the country from different, from the three different regions. And then they, you know, produce the wines onsite in Chişinău. And so basically I thought they were doing beautiful, beautiful wines, but also I even love their labels. Their labels were just so stunning. Very modern and artistic. And again, it, it kind of just gave me that kind of sign that they are very, you know, aware of like global markets and how they're not just making wine to kind of supply wine, they and wine they're gonna sell and they're definitely gonna sell it. It looks and tastes really good. Um, and so I was very impressed with Atu winery. Um, and then wines like Minis Terrios. I didn't, I didn't visit Minis Terrios and it's another very small producer. It was a kind of husband and wife team. They had studied in Burgundy, came back to their home country and started to make very elegant wines and you know, their wine, I just tried it at a local restaurant and I was, again, really impressed with how great it was and it's a mix of Merlot, Cabernet, and Fetească Neagră. So they're really working with, okay, so we can do a bit of a bit of our local varieties, a bit of, um, international plantings, cause you still have to use the grapes that are planted there. I guess of it's not, it's easy to say, oh, let's all go, um, you know, let's all go native, but actually, you know, you have to work with what they've got, which is all the plantings that they've still inherited.

**Janina Doyle 00:31:35** And any others?

**Victoria Daskal 00:31:37** Yeah. Another, another one I would say definitely is Gogu. Gogu is down in Ştefan Vodă. It's a, um, a young man who basically was, you know, quite new on the scene and he's now making these gorgeous white and red wines. I think I put his white in my selection of, you know, top wines from Moldova, but even his reds. I mean, they're all very, very good. Um, so I would say Gogu is

one to, to seek. Um, and actually I'm gonna mention one that I is, is not a newbie by any means, but it's really worth mentioning. It's Pucari. Pucari is right on the border with Ukraine and they're really close and I visited them and it's very historical, um, producer actually like they, they made wines from the 1800s and you know, of the kind of original wineries. Um, but they've done very, very great, you know, different styles. And I think it's another one to have in mind because although they're not, you know, the next generation, they're still making wines that are really good.

**Janina Doyle 00:32:39** I'm so excited. I love listening to people just talking about wine regions that really are, are, undiscovered. I think you said that that Moldova is a hidden gem. Right? You've made it sound exactly like that. And we all need to go and investigate more because quite clearly lots is gonna change there. They're definitely developing. And if they're making really good premium wines now, where are they gonna go?

**Victoria Daskal 00:33:01** Yeah. I think it'll be on more wine lists hopefully around the world.

**Janina Doyle 00:33:06** Absolutely. So everyone go and get yourself a, should we be saying Moldovan wine or Moldovian wine?

**Victoria Daskal 00:33:13** I think Moldovan wine, but I think, you know, perhaps is different ways to say. It's confusing. I would say Moldovan wine.

**Janina Doyle 00:33:19** Moldovan wine. There we go, there you have it. We're not a hundred percent sure, but yes. Go give yourself a glass or a bottle. Well, more likely a bottle. You need to go and find, go and get yourself a bottle of Moldovan wine and um, see what you all think, right?

**Victoria Daskal 00:33:32** Yeah, definitely.

**Janina Doyle 00:33:33** Absolutely. Thank you so much, Victoria. Literally for just scratching the surface for us. And um, everyone needs to go ahead it a Mummy Wine Club: male, female, with child, without child, whoever you are, all you need to do is like some wine. And now we know definitely we can get some Moldovan wine from you.

**Victoria Daskal 00:33:51** Yes. Thank you so much. It was been lovely to talk to you. Thank you Janina.

**Janina Doyle 00:33:55** No, it was my pleasure. And I'll talk to you about something else very soon. I'm sure. Take care.

**Victoria Daskal 00:34:01** Take care. Bye.

**Janina Doyle 00:34:06** So guys, if you get yourself over to [mummywineclub.com](http://mummywineclub.com) April subscription box is actually not Black Sea themed, but entirely Moldova wines. I think when Victoria had to decide which few to go in a box, the decision was too hard make, so it is all dedicated to Moldova this month. So you're gonna find Pucari, Victoria mentioned, these guys have been going since the 1800s and during these times, apparently the Pucari wines were as popular as Bordeaux and Burgundy. And I believe these guys are exporting more of their wines world wide than any of the other wineries. So wherever you guys are, you're most likely to be able to find some wines from Pucari. So she's got the Negru de Pucari. This is a 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Saperavi and 5% Rara Negra. Now talking about Rara Negra, which of course is indigenous. She's also got the Novak Rara Negra. Now these guys have, rebirthed a number of forgotten varieties that were thought to have already been lost. Then there is a

delicious Rosé. It is the Sălcuța, which I tasted at the beginning of the podcast, that you definitely want to try. And then for the white it's by a winery called Timbris and it's their Viorica. So the lovely floral and aromatic white grape variety. Now not easy to find a wine quote from Moldova itself. So I've stuck with a wine quote from a female wine educator as this episode, of course has been rather educational or so I hope. And so I found one from Karen McNeil. So she is a top wine writer and she's also the author of the award winning bestseller, *The Wine Bible*, should anybody be looking for another wine book. And in the wine Bible, she says:

"I love wine because it is one of the last true things. In a world digitized to distraction, a world where you can't get out of your pajamas without your cell phone, wine remains utterly primary. Unrushed. The silent music of nature. For 8,000 years, vines clutching the earth have thrust themselves upward towards the sun and given us juicy berries and ultimately wine. In every sip taken in the present we drink in the past."

Ugh, honestly, I salute all of you wine writers, that you are able to create something with words, so romantic, with such poetic flare. I'm inspired by you all. One day, one day, my vocabulary may reach those heights. Anyway, that is it for today. Thank you everybody for listening as always, you know, make sure you have liked the podcast, subscribe to the podcast and share it with all your wine loving friends. And if you are listening on apple podcasts, you know, it makes the podcast far more discoverable. If you can take one moment to leave me a comment or a review. So next week's podcast is just me and I've really enjoyed the last three guests: our female winemaker, female master of wine, female wine educator, and writer. And so I feel inspired and lifted. It's great seeing women supporting women. So next week, I'm gonna talk about a few incredible women, past and present that you should definitely know about. So go grab yourself that glass or bottle of Moldovan wine, and I'll see you again here next week. Cheers to you.